St. Clair Family

Special Collections

3803 Vanneter Rd
Williamston, MI 48895
August 1, 1986

Dear "Cousin" Jacqueline,

Enclosed is a copy of John Simpler's birth record (he was not born in 1764 as Maude Russell guessed) from a photostat of a record book of St. George's Protestant Episcopal Church (located near Hollymount, Delaware--see map). The record "translates":

John--Son of Thomas & Leah Simpler--bor^{n} 16 Mar^{h} 1772 (page 34)

The 2 of 1772 doesn't show on this copy. Later, I'll send you a copy of Thomas Simpler's will in which he mentions John.

From court records in Morgantown, Monongalia County, West Virginia, we can infer that John and his in-laws the Josephs were in (West) Virginia by the spring of 1795. In April 1802 the Simplers and Josephs sold their land. Thus they probably started for Kentucky in the spring of 1802 (at latest the fall of 1802). The Josephs appear on a Breckenridge County, Kentucky, tax list in May 1803, and the Simplers appear in July 1804. The Simplers left Kentucky for Indiana probably late in 1815 or early 1816, by September 1816 John had secured land near Sullivan.

At the time they moved to Indiana, documents show the family name spelled as: Sinklear (even Pinkler in Tract Book 5), Sinclear, St. Clair, Sinclair, Sinclare. Indiana census records use several spellings, including Sinklair, Sinklaer, Sinclear, Sinclair. The variants, St. Clair, St. Clear, and St. Clare, are quite infrequent until 1850 and later.

It is worth noting that an apparently well known and propertied family whose name was spelled Sinkler (they signed documents--and not with an "X") lived in Breckenridge County, Kentucky, before John Simpler moved there.

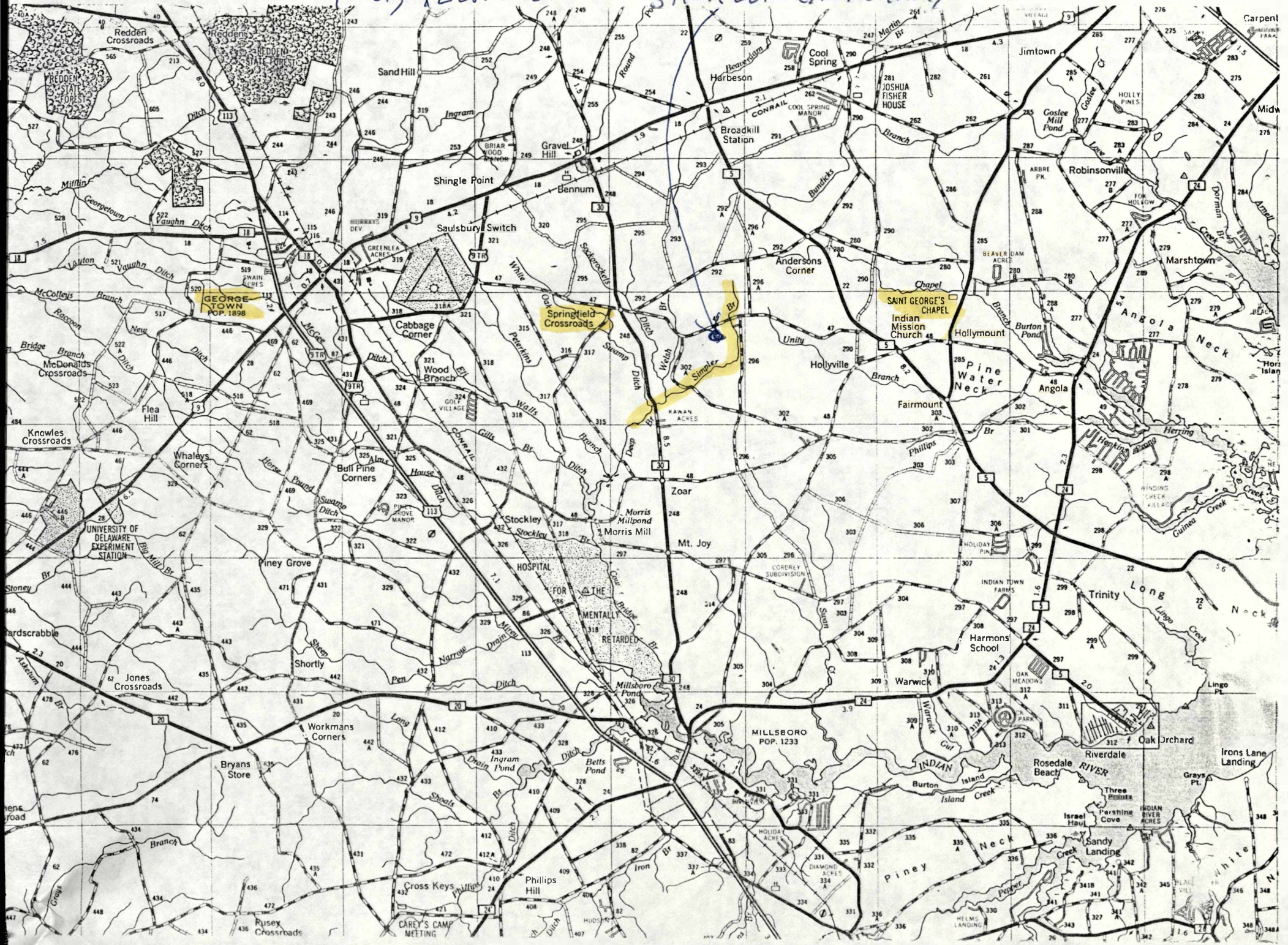
More about John's family. He was the second child (oldest son) of 13 or 14 children. His father, Thomas Simpler, was born 22 Mar 1742 and died 7 Feb 1826. His mother, Leah Rodney, was born 21 Mar 1750 and died 10 Feb 1826. Leah was the daughter of William and Mary Rodney of Worcester County, Maryland. Thomas was the second son (there were five sons, apparently no daughters) of Philip Simpler (will probated 10 Nov 1781) and Susannah Copes.

The Delaware Simpler that I mentioned in my letter of 28 May (he came to this country in the 1740s) does not seem to be connected to our Simpler "clan." Our "clan" may very well go back into the 1600s. Some family members in Delaware and Maryland think the Simpler's came up to Delaware from Accomac County, Virginia. (They also were astounded at the change in the name from Simpler to Sinclair/St. Clair.)

I will send more details later.

As ever,

Chuck St. Clair

PORTION OF SUSSEX CO., DELAWARE

SIMPLER GRAVEYARD